

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

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25X1SUBJECT Handling of Files and Safeguarding of Documents  
in the USSR Merchant Fleet

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1. In the Merchant as well as the River Fleet of the USSR, all documents are filed according to their category and purpose, in case folders under appropriate headings. The normal, accepted order of filing documents is called "filing in the order of inquiries and responses". For example, if some official receives a document and acts on it after a certain time, the originating or requesting document and the answering or action document are filed as follows: first the originating document is inserted or fastened in the appropriate case folder and then the action document is filed over it, and so on in this order, request underneath and response on top of it.
2. In the Merchant Marine, as well as the River Fleet, the Chief Archives Administration of the USSR has established a table of cases, with their indicated designation, length of time to be retained in the organizations and in archives, as well as the procedure for their delivery to archives. Every large organization or enterprise in the Merchant Marine has an archives in the Administration Properties Division (Administrativno-khozyaystvennyy otdel). Case files from all organization or enterprise departments are delivered to this archive as they become due. In small organizations where there are no archives, the appropriate official retains the documents himself during the entire time they remain in the organization. As the time of retention of the documents in organization or enterprise archives runs out, the documents are delivered to municipal or oblast' archives which are always run by the MVD.

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3. According to the way they are filed in archives, documents are divided as follows:

- (a) Documents which are kept in the archives of organizations or enterprises for a determined period, one, two, or three years. When this period has elapsed the documents, after they have been coordinated with the oblast or municipal archives of the MVD, are burned or used for paper pulp. This category includes less important documents which have no value such as:
  - (1) Correspondence between organizations and individual economic units within the organization.
  - (2) Correspondence between the given organization and other organizations and enterprises which are not subordinate to the given organization. This can include organizations which are not in the Merchant Marine.
  - (3) Correspondence concerning statements and complaints of the workers.
  - (4) Correspondence concerning "Socialist Competition" and the inculcation of advanced work methods.
  - (5) Records of voyages completed by vessels of the transport fleet and work assignments completed by the service-auxiliary and the technical fleet.
- (b) Documents which, after remaining in the archives of an organization for a definite period, are supposed to be delivered to the oblast or municipal archives of the MVD where they are retained for a period of either three or five years. The second category includes the following types of documents:
  - (1) Correspondence with officials of the Ministry.
  - (2) Correspondence concerning wages, salaries and premiums for workers, engineer-technical employees and office employees.
  - (3) Correspondence concerning establishment of work norms for the workers.
  - (4) Statistical exploitation reports.
  - (5) Operational exploitation reports.
- (c) Documents which are retained permanently in the organization or enterprise archives. The third category includes the following types of documents:
  - (1) Archives of the construction-design bureau and departments.
  - (2) Orders and regulations by managers of organizations.
  - (3) Production-finance plans for shore organizations.
  - (4) Production-finance plans for the fleet.
  - (5) Preliminary finance figures. (kontrol'nyye tsifry)
  - (6) Balance sheets of the basic activity of the organization.
  - (7) Balance sheets of subsidiary organizations contained in the given organizations.
- (d) Documents which are retained for a definite period of three years in the organization archives and then delivered for permanent filing in oblast or municipal archives. This category includes:
  - (1) Secret and top secret correspondence.
  - (2) Statistical and bookkeeping reports on the production and financial activity of the organization or enterprise.

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- (3) Correspondence with the Ministry on questions of legislative acts.
  - (4) Correspondence with the Government.
  - (5) Orders, regulations and decrees of the Government and Ministry.
4. Files containing secret and top secret correspondence are not retained in the archives of the organizations or enterprises. Up until a certain time they are kept in the safes of the Secret-Coding and the Military-Mobilization divisions and in the safes of those officials who carry on secret correspondence. Upon expiration of the retention period the documents are delivered to the secret section of the oblast' or the municipal archives of the MVD.
  5. If during the course of a year several folders are commenced for the same file, they are numbered as each folder is completed. Each folder is supposed to be marked with the case or file number, its designation, date of commencement and completion of the folder, and designation of the division which is handling the given case. When delivered to the archives, all the papers in the folder must be sewed in with threads, all the pages must be numbered and all the folders of the same case must be numbered and fastened together. On every folder the number of pages contained in it must be indicated.
  6. Case folders are delivered and signed for by the appropriate official (manager of the archive, archivist, chief of the administration-properties division). If the owner of the file demands it, the file must be issued immediately. Anyone requiring a file from the archives which he himself did not deliver to archives must have written permission to withdraw the file from the person who did deliver it to archives, otherwise the file will not be issued.
  7. In conclusion, [ ] most officials resist delivering their completed cases to archives and retain most of their completed cases in their divisions for years and even decades. Most officials do not trust archives and besides, they fail to surrender documents in order to avoid the trouble and red tape involved in securing their return. When there is need of some document from archives, it is necessary to wait a long time (sometimes weeks and months) while the document is found, if it is ever found. Thus, most officials tend to retain archive documents and cases in their divisions, knowing that they will be safe and immediately available when needed.

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